1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
528 Bush Negroes 528
Saramacca

REBEL DESTINY

764 [539] "On the sacred apinti drum we speak to the spirit; we tell it we go to dig the grave." So the drum spoke. From the shore we could see five figures in the small corial, and, as they came closer, we saw also the drum, the food the men carried, and the muddy hoe. They would do this the next day and the next, for to dig a grave takes a long time.

I

795 769 191 Although separated by many generations from their African places of origin, the Bush Negroes of Dutch Guiana have held to the traditions and beliefs of their aboriginal home. In the Surinaame bush, as in Africa, the responsibility which an individual bears toward his social group does not end with death. His clan, his village, and his family look to him, when he has joined the spirits of his ancestors, to protect them against the magic of their enemies, to help them in time of drought or pestilence, and at all times to intercede for them with the gods.

As in Africa, the spirit of the dead is powerful for good or evil, and the rites of death must be carried out as tradition demands, so that the dead man may feel he has received honor among the living and proper introduction to the world of the dead. As in Africa, we found that the 764A 191 first care for the dead is to place the body on the central portion of a broken canoe; that rum and tobacco are included in the water with which the body is washed; that in washing the dead, the back must not be touched; that the number of those who wash the body must not be [801] an even one—five is the number preferred, though three persons are used, and seven; that those chosen must not be young, for it takes age and the knowledge of controlling the spirits which age brings to approach the dead without suffering harm.

764 While the body lies in the open house of the dead, relatives and the village elders are in attendance on the spirit night and day. It is they who all night tell stories about the trickster, spider Ananasi, to amuse the spirit, and they who play traditional games. The dances begin when

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
[illegible]
Sammaoca

782 Among the people of one group, the principal ceremony
24 may be held in the clearing itself. The drums are brought,
535 and men and women and children pray for fertility. The beautifully carved apinti drum sounds the invocation to the Great God and to the ancestors, while the tall agida drums are brought to call the earth spirits. Two by two the men dance susa, the dance which in pantomime reproduces an ancient warrior's combat with spear and shield, the winner taking on a new combatant, until the final winner is given a wand as a reward, and gains for himself the title of "G'aman of Susa" until the next dance is held. Other dances follow. Perhaps the women now line up in two long
[585] rows facing each other, and dance bandamba, the dance
845 which celebrates marriage and the birth of twins, and the birth of a child who is born feet foremost. The motions are the slow rhythmic manipulations of the muscles of hips and
840 abdomen. It is a dance of fertility, danced by the very young girls as well as by those who have borne children.
888 But the women who are past the age for dancing sit with their men, arms interlaced, swaying to the rhythms of the songs they sing. . . . There are offerings to the earth spirits, poured upon the earth out of black obia pots and
• 769 calabashes, while other offerings are set upon the ground for the ancestors.

In another settlement, the ritual would be chiefly carried on in the village itself, and there might be a local dance of
842 fertility, danced nowhere else on the river. "An old, old ancestress taught it to us," the villagers would say.

462 When it is time to plant, the woman plants with the
241 man's help.

782 "When I plant a new field," said the younger woman, "I
539 pray as I work."

And this is her prayer:

O Sky God, Mother of the Earth, Ancestors,
I am planting a field,
Make it bear;
People who come to me must eat,

Herskovits & Herskovits 2-6 (1928-1929) 1934
[illegible] Bush Negroes [illegible]
Saramacca

where, in the proper season, maripa nuts and rice were dried.

One quarter differed very little from another, except that in one there might grow the plant which yielded the red and black beans used for the sacred rattles, and for playing the game of adji, which entertained the spirit of the dead while the body lay in state. Instead of a house to the family gods, there might be found a mound of earth in front of one doorway, with an axe-head lying upon it as a shrine for a man's spirit, or a low forked stick sunk into the ground, holding a pot with water and weeds in it for the curing powers of its obia.

A village of any size had also a quarter in which stood the communal buildings. The council house which might also serve on occasion as the house for the dead was there. The menstrual house for the women, a small building which was recognized by a broken calabash, or a porcelain pot brought from the white man's city, lying outside the entrance, stood a little to the side. The Kromanti house, and perhaps an enclosed shelter for the bush gods who shared the shrine with the snake deities, was also located somewhere near the open communal shrine. A village wherein lived the clan head contained in addition a house for the ancestral spirits of the clan. This was called a *Fa'aka-pau wosu*, literally a flagpole house, a euphemism for the shrine to the ancestors for whom white cotton was put up on sticks. In this Fa'aka-pau wosu prayers were offered up for all the important ventures of the clan, and in time of stress a priest would come there with sacrifices, to bid one of the ancestors to enter his body and give him sight. When seizure came on, such a priest prophesied. Sometimes the ancestors were consulted in the same manner as that in which the will of the dead was ascertained. Men would take up a sacred plank and carry it in a state of possession; the elders would put questions to the ancestor who had been called. The answers were construed as favorable or unfavorable according to the way the plank tipped.

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

they told us, though never willing to name the villages where they stood, whose walls were most elaborately ornamented with symbols marked in red and black and white, the three sacred colors which appeared on the stools and which the men used for painting their faces and bodies for the dances. On the upper river we had been told that these shrines were in the villages below, and on the lower river it was always intimated that it was up above where the great shrines stood. We had been told of stools which were whitened with sacred pemba, and blackened with soot in the *Fa'aka Pau* houses—the houses of the ancestral spirits—and of the covered whitened vessels which were in the Vodu and Apuku houses, the shrines for the bush and snake deities, placed there for the spirits when they chose to animate them.

So we found it in this house dedicated to the spirits of the bush.

The hut was narrow and long, with walls of woven palm, and a floor made of hard smooth clay into which bare feet had nevertheless worn grooves. To one side of the door stood a drum of the type called *tamao*—the long drum. It was cylindrical, and narrowed but slightly toward the bottom. White clay had once covered it, but now there were irregular lines of white marking the cracks in the wood.

On the other side of the door, against the same wall, lay several large balls of clay. These the old woman was keeping for the obia pots she would make from time to time. Among the Negroes of the town as well as in the bush, these black pots, made by women of the bush, were held to have great magical potency.

"I never make too many pots at once," the old woman said. "I make them for myself as I need them and for the young people of the family." A woman who had not passed her period of childbearing could not make them. "Obia pots are things for old, old women. I cannot tell you about making them."

Leaving these lumps of clay, the woman led us farther into the enclosure, until we stood in front of a raised altar

REBEL DESTINY

This, he went on to explain, had the meaning that obia was not so great as the very great gods, and it was not to be ranked with the lesser deities who served as emissaries for the great gods, yet when the great gods wanted to help mankind, it was through obia that they healed and purified, it was to obia that men were instructed to turn.

It seems that when the Sky God created the Earth Mother and the Mother of the River, he also created man and beast. Man had a poor time of it, pitting himself against the forces of earth and sky and water. And so that man might survive, the Sky God had had to send obia into the world to help man. Obia was not a god, it was a spirit. It gave people knowledge of herbs which cured, and herbs which prevented sickness. Obia warned of danger, and made known those properties of earth and water and air which healed and calmed. Obia taught the use of the band of metal on the arm, or the string about the waist which forewarned of evil, and made man wary and alert.

After obia came into the world, the Sky God sent Akantamasu, the god of the ant hill, to plague man. Perhaps obia had made of man an overbearing creature, defiant even against the great gods, so that the Sky God brought the Akantamasu spirit into being to teach him humility.

The answer of the Bush Negro was, of course, that so it was, and so it had been long ago, but why, he did not know. The Sky God had willed it so, and the Sky God was so far from man that he never vouchsafed explanations to human beings, and they in turn rarely taxed him to ease their bewilderment.

There was also the power of the ancestors, but our Bush Negro friends were never certain as to how they ranked in the supernatural hierarchy. Some said they ranked after the Earth Mother and the Mother of the River, that they were greater than obia, because the ancestors punished as well as helped mankind, and when angered their punishment came swifter than that of the powerful Akantamasu gods. Others said the ancestors were greater than obia, because obia had been given to the ancestors long ago,

M. Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
Bush Negroes
Saramacca

and it was they who in dream or vision, or in a state of possession, instructed living men in the ways of yet greater and greater obia. But there were those who held that obia ranked after the greatest of the deities, that obia surpassed the power of the ancestors, for obia knew how to make "*yoko tapu*"—preventives against troublesome ghosts, and obia men could summon the dead to enter the body of a living man to make revelations.

Whatever the position of obia in the supernatural world, its place on earth was to serve man, for of all living beings, man alone knew obia.

2

What were the manifestations of obia in the life of the Bush Negro as we found them?

A black pot with its magic powers was an obia pot, the charm worn about the neck was called an obia, the medicines we gave the natives for their eyes or their cuts were called white man's obia, and their own mixture of weeds steeped in water, which stood in the burning sun gathering a green scum until it should be ready for use, was also obia. Young Yamati who had danced susa for us did not have a cord about his neck, but, he had assured us, he had obia for long life as did his partner Sabape, though his own could not be seen, since it consisted of several obia cuts made shortly after birth, which served instead of the cord. The strings about the waists of children were obias. The slight cuts to be noticed on men's arms, on thighs, below the knee, below the shoulder blades were obia cuts, too.

Nor was that all.

Bayo had said to us, "When obia comes a man does bad things. He destroys. When minr comes, it is ugly sometimes."

It was obia, too—Apanto's obia—which had stopped our phonograph, and obia again, invoked this time by Bayo, which had strengthened the spirit of the machine.

We talked about obia to an elder, a village head, from one of the down-river settlements, which was not, however,

2: Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Aucaner

766 643 [522] teresting things concerning burials. A Granman's or a captain's body is placed in a cave-like hole dug in the side of a hill, and is eventually sealed in. It is forbidden to throw dirt upon the bodies of such officials.

764 In the case of an ordinary person, a large hole is dug in the ground in which the corpse is lowered. A plank is placed over the body, so that the dirt subsequently thrown into the hole will not come into direct contact with the body.

766 The bodies of albinos, idiots, and lepers are otherwise disposed of. These people are supposed to be related to the river, and are called *watra pekin*, or water children. Instead of being allowed to rot, their bodies are placed in a pit dug in the bank when the river is low. When the water rises, the corpse is washed out of its temporary tomb.

● 769 Every year the azang pau, the palm barrier across the village path, is renewed, and at this time prayers are said for the dead. The dead person's relatives have shaved off their forelocks when he died, and often again at intervals of three, six, and nine months thereafter. But after the lapse of a year there is no mourning; a large dance is held to signify that the period is terminated, and after that the dead man or woman is relegated to the position of an ancestor. The prayers then ask him to intercede with the gods for the benefit of those still among the living.

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Surinam Carver

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Ancestor Shrine, Village of Adawai, Saramaccaner Tribe.

[Facing p. 85]

/25 cont./

923 695 (544) The peace conditions are determined in a large building (shed). This shed is entirely open, they call it their court of justice, derived from kroetoe hoso or piketti (1). When they find

1. Piketti, place where the execution of the punishment takes place.

themselves there, whether this takes place after the conclusion of an internecine battle, or between spouses, members of a family, or former friends, the heads of the parties gather in the shed referred to and choose their places in the upper part of the building. Subsequently those concerned in this matter place themselves in the vicinity of the heads, and around these all those present who make up the public.

When all have been placed, one of the heads takes a cup (as a rule a calabash) filled with dram or still unfermented sugar cane. He scatters a few drops of this on the ground in various places in the shed, which signifies that their ancestors, who also once sat on this spot and passed judgment, are to be called up in the memory of all, and that the deceased, by having this offering presented to them first, have had respect paid to them.

(969) (782)

Once this solemnity has been carried out, the cup goes around to each one, and each of those present takes a small draught from it. After it has been emptied, and none of them has refrained from drinking from it, the peace is regarded as concluded, all feuds are forgiven, and the enmity has ceased to exist.

Should it happen that one of those present refuses to drink, then he must publicly give the reason for his refusal, and then it may sometimes happen that the considerations concerning the quarrel start anew.

(693) /26/ Then the elders or council members ordinarily withdraw from the shed and leave behind only their granman (1).

1. Head or governor.

Those who have withdrawn divide themselves into different groups and consult with one another, make the matter clear and

/509 cont./
October 1958 – January 1959), expeditions whose principal aim was the sociological study of these populations.

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Social Structure and Way of Life

The Boni Refugee Blacks. The Boni are one of the above-mentioned tribes of the Refugee Blacks, reconstituted in the course of the eighteenth century by rebel African slaves who escaped from Surinam plantations (Dutch Guiana).

These tribes (Saramaka, Djuka, Paramaka, Boni) live for the most part along the rivers of the interior of Surinam. They group together a total of 25,000 persons.

With very rare exceptions, the Refugee Blacks are pure Africans. These populations, vigorous and well adapted to the country, have experienced in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a remarkable demographic increase, attested to by all the authors. Descended from small rebel groups which could not have contained more than a few hundred women, they are now estimated at more than 25,000 persons.

The Boni of the Upper Maroni, the subject of the present study, number approximately 800, of whom 660 are on the French bank (the villages of Bonaville, l'Enfant Perdu, Loka, Asisi, Papaikan, and Kormotibo) and 140 on the Surinam bank (the village of Kotika). These villages were established long ago.

Each of them groups together a matrilineage, i.e., the descendants in the uterine line of one single founding ancestress/ certain villages know their genealogy in its entirety back to this ancestress, who must have lived at the end of the eighteenth century. The members of the lineage are united by the cult of the ancestor, which binds them firmly to their natal village and to their land. The social system is based essentially on this cult, the chief of the village being above all the priest of the ancestors.

Strictly speaking, there is no marriage, but only an acknowledged concubinage which entails neither a contract between the

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[For information on various types of buildings and other physical structures or facilities present in each of the Boni villages, see the village plans on pp. 66, 68, 70, 72, 74, and 76, category 116. Included are data on the occurrence of menstrual huts (mumu), kitchens, granaries, and sundry other outbuildings, religious structures (gadu), mortuary sheds, boatbuilding yards, guest houses for visitors, wharfs, fraga tiki (i.e. lineage ancestor cult shrines and objects), and useful trees within the village area which are personally owned.]

/19 cont./

613 62 571 The principle of localization of matrilineal kin groups, each in a separate village, continues respected. However, as in all African populations, the actual structure is noticeably different from the theoretical organization:

1st. Fragments of paternal kin groups, as well as several small groups of heterogeneous origin, insufficient in number to form a separate unit, have been agglomerated with the lo. Such is the case for example of the Tolna lineage, a small group which fled from Surinam at the end of the 19th century and agglomerated with the Papalston lo;

[578] 2nd. Scissions have been produced within the lo as a result of disagreements. A group issuing from the Papalston lo founded Wétiti village in the Lower Maroni beside Apatu. A group issuing from the Kotika lo founded Ma Imma village in the same region. Finally, from the Dipélu II lo a group separated which settled in Asisi. Asisi village is thus in fact nowadays the juxtaposition of three villages: Asisi-Dju, Asisi-Awara Bakka, Asisi-Dipélu II, each having its organization and its separate territory.

[829] These scissions have no appreciable repercussions on the social life of the Boni, for the groups thus separated from the lo, in addition to being very small in numbers, are not recognized by [769] the grand man as distinct social units. They remain subject to the head of the lo to which ancestor worship attaches them.

361 613 621 Besides the residence villages, a certain number of Boni have personal farming habitations distributed on the lands of their lineage along both banks of the river and on the islands. These habitations designated by the word kāpu, camp, have no permanent character; their existence does not violate the principle of localization of the lineage; each Boni is obliged at least in principle to build a house in his native village and to live in it part of the year. [769] The village of origin of each /20/ lineage is called "great village": [778] it is there that the members of the group meet to pray to the ancestors in front of the fraga tiki.

174 /30 cont./
613 1st. Lo = de facto grouping of rebels of any provenance,
614 which has in the long run split up into lineages but which remains
621 in the form of a common worship;
571 2nd. Lo = lineage, from the very beginning.
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Conceptions Relative to Kinship and Marriage

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[121] Ties between the individual and the ancestors. Before examining more deeply the social and family structure of the Refugee Blacks, it is indispensable to study what religious ties are implied between [184] the individual and the ancestors. Here one is in the presence of basic beliefs which seem identical in the various tribes of Refugee Blacks of Guiana and of which their structure is the consequence.

In the civilizations of Blacks Africa it is supposed that a [171] current of life and /31/ strength circulates from the divinity to men through the medium of the ancestors. Among the Refugee Blacks it is taken for granted that in this respect each man is bound [182] to his ancestors through the maternal line only. If he falls prey to illness, injustice, or adversity, he can call only on them in his prayer.

593 That does not mean that the tie with the father is ignored [827] or considered as having little importance; it is taken for granted, as we shall see, that in the creation of man certain psychic elements are transmitted from father to son. But the current of strength binding the individual to the ancestors does not pass through the father. One cannot pray usefully to the soul of one's dead father. [155] If I am sick and divination incriminates the action of my dead [172] father's soul, I cannot address either prayer or offering directly to him; for that I shall have recourse to one of his near relatives in the maternal line.

614 /31 cont./

769 Another very important principle in the minds of the Refugee
796 Blacks is that prayers must be collective: the principal ceremonies,
613 such as the New Year's prayer, must bring together, at least in principle, the total lineage.

These notions certainly have influenced the custom of the
182 Refugee Blacks with respect to residence and marriage. The lineage
613 cannot allow the permanent departure of a woman from her native
614 country any more than that of a man. In the populations of Black
591 Africa with matrilineal filiation, this conception is reconciled
[171] with the necessities of practical living in the following manner: the wife leaves her relatives to settle down with her husband, but when her children reach adulthood they must return there. Thus one cannot attribute to this preoccupation alone the special system of marriage among the Refugee Blacks, which does not involve the permanent cohabitation of man and wife. We shall see that this system was inspired by social and psychological necessities. But concern for the unity of the lineage, to which it corresponds perfectly, has surely contributed to make of it a rigorous principle of customary law.

601 Kinship within the matrilineage. The kinship terms translate a
613 purely classificatory system. It depends only on the number of
611 generations separating from the foundress. The sons of women descended from the foundress in uterine line are regarded as members of the matrilineage and united in the system of appellation. The children of these men are no longer part of the matrilineage.

Surinam--Sda K-5 (1948-1958) 1961 SRS Bush Negroes SRS
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Fig. 5. Boni Village

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Fig. 6. The [illegible] tuki of the Koriko

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613 554 The small, recently founded lineages attached to a lo each designate a head: for example, the Afi lineage has Awéni as head. But this head remains subject to the authority of the captain of the lo and his office has no official existence.

/97/ The appointment is made by a council - kuutu - of the lineage, but it is not valid until endorsed by the grand man.

[787] When the deceased captain did not, while living, designate any successor, his yɔɔka is interrogated in order to know whom he prefers. That does not have the force of law but can influence the council.

The council meets several days after the end of mourning for the deceased captain. All the male members of the lineage, regardless of age, give their opinion. Strictly speaking, they do not vote; but the nomination is considered valid only if three-quarters of those present are in agreement. If not, they disband without having decided anything, and the lineage can remain without a head for years. On this topic can be cited the example of the Awara Bakka lo, which remained without a head from 1935 (?) to 1959, until the appointment of Kouduku. During this time the [643] grand man had designated Captain Popo, head of the Lapé lineage, to secure the interim. As for the religious functions, they were taken care of by the joyen of the lineage.

The captain has the following functions within the lineage:

1) He is priest of the ancestor worship and presides over [793] the prayers and offerings made before the fraga tiki. In this duty [769] he is replaced in case of absence by the oldest man of the lineage.

In case of the death of a member of the lineage from the [761] effect of the kunu, the captain convokes all his people in order [782] to proceed to collective prayers and offerings intended to appease the gods:

Gt Hucult--141 K-5 (1946-1960) 1961 SRF Bush Negroes SRS
Boni
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R 105 [361] The Oayana Indians are half nomadic, moving their villages every ten years on the average. They have neither a permanent center of peopling, a place of worship, nor a cemetery; they do not have ancestor worship, at least no concept involving a precise and permanent tie between the living, the dead, and the land.

R 114 182 [36] This state of things has been attributed by several authors to the geographical environment and especially to the ravages of the maniac ant; the maniac ant, swarming particularly in formerly cultivated zones, makes nomadism advantageous. From this would have resulted a social structure and a mode of living adapted to these special conditions.

B 114 • 769 182 The example of the Refugee Blacks shows conspicuously that these considerations, in spite of their undeniable interest, do not constitute an explanation of general scope: for the Refugee Blacks, the only social tie conceivable flow from ancestor worship; above all the imperatives of material life the individual feels as a primordial duty the act of attaching himself to the village of his ancestors, to the land they cleared off and which remains under their protection.

B 182 241 423 613 The difficulties inherent in the geographical environment have been easily surmounted or gotten around. Rather than vast zones with one single holder, each lineage divided its finage into sectors distant from one another. If these zones become temporarily unusable, the Boni go to create farming habitations on the upper course of the river, without ceasing because of this to reside habitually in the village of their ancestors; there results from this no other constraint but losing two weeks each year in going and coming on the river.

/122 cont./

845 [621] Observation at Maripasoula, November 3, 1956. The wife of Balna, boatman of the border-fixing mission, gave birth at Pikin Tabiki, small farming village where she works with her mother and the latter's husband. Balna went to be present at the delivery.

It was very long and dramatic. According to Balna, an ogi sani had entered the child's body, making him stiff and impossible to extract. As a last resort they called a neighbor, T.... known for having a good gita. He called his gadu who revealed an efficacious remedy, since after the body of the sick woman was bathed with the prescribed leaves, the delivery ended successfully.

846 [545] Since we were leaving on our trip, it remained to find someone to take his place in fulfilling one of the husband's duties: cutting the supply of wood for heating the water necessary for the hot douches /showers?/ the mother was going to be given several times a day for about three months. He made an agreement for that with Kwata, his mother-in-law's husband, to whom he will pay about 1,000 francs.

851 613 [603] Presentation of the child. On the eighth day the maternal grandmother (or great-grandmother if she is still living) takes the child and gives it to another ancestress of the same lineage, stationed in front of the house. The latter presents it to the family. Then the head of the lineage, without taking the child, goes to the fraga tiki to make an offering of tafia, asking the ancestors to protect it. [769] [778] [782]

For example, for the birth of A ... (Lapé Tabiki village), son of O Yundu (L2, G60), it was Asakundu, grandmother of Yundu and great-grandmother of the child, who came to take him in the house and gave him over to her sister Térésa (L2, E57) to present him to the family (see genealogical table of the Lapé lineage, fraction 2).

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/136 cont./

The fact that some children are under the guardianship of their father changes nothing about their position with respect to ancestor worship and does not entail any payment or compensation whatever on the part of the father. When the child has grown up he will be able to come back to live in his maternal kin group (which he does most often) or stay in his father's village. On this point there is no precise customary obligation.

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The father plays an important role with respect to the children when they reach manhood; he procures their 2bia for them and transmits the knowledge and magical powers which he himself received from his father.

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Inheritance of guardianship. At the death of the guardian, his office is bequeathed in the same way as his goods and according to the same principle of dispersion of the inheritance. If he was raising several children, the guardianship of each one will be bequeathed individually.

For example Béniti († 1944) was raising OK... 1944, daughter of her daughter Balkom, and OW... 1942, daughter of her son Fintiman and a woman of Papaïston village. She bequeathed the first to her daughter Kulina, the second to her daughter Balkom settled in Loka village. W... thus found herself taken to a village which was neither that of her maternal nor her paternal relatives. Such cases are not rare. The child's uncles, who in principle could take back the guardianship, never seem to oppose, in practice, its being bequeathed. /137/

The spiritual power kept by the guardian over his ward after he becomes adult is bequeathed in the same manner. Thus, in the preceding example, Béniti († 1955) /sic/ bequeathed the spiritual tutelage she was keeping over each one of her adult sons and daughters whom she had raised herself, in part to outsiders to her lineage.

/139 cont./

684 Committing pikadu is one of the most serious offenses that
685 a Refugee Black can commit; of course, as in the rest of the moral prescriptions, no abstract principle is called on: the elders teach the children from their earliest years: "If you com-
[613] mit pikadu, you will fall ill or die." The head of the lineage inflicts severe punishments on the guilty people to boot: for the man, to make a large number of planks with an adze; for the woman, to prepare and winnow as preparation for the next broko de several touques /cans/ of rice, a long and tedious job.

588 However, if in spite of insults and blows a man and woman of the same bee absolutely insist on marrying, people end up, for the sake of peace and quiet, by accepting the ac-
[769] [778] [782] complished fact. They go to the fraga tiki to make an offering of tafia to the ancestors to ask them to forgive the offense committed. No reprobation extends to the children born of this union.

613 588 [684] In the Awara Bakka lineage, which has practically rejected the law of exogamy, the principle of a sanction remains and there is a pretense of chasing the guilty ones across the village.

Not being able to use coercion and not having the right to expel a member of the lineage, captain and council can exert no material sanction.

613 684 The same notion of pikadu is attached to unions between persons of the same patrilineage, although these patrilineages have no effective organization and exist only by the transmission of the fundamental interdiction, bwasi kina.

2/9 Before concluding an official or even clandestine union, the man and woman make sure that they do not have the same bwasi kina and in such a case give up their project; that, even if they are from different tribes, for example a Boni woman and a Saramaka.

Schwartz--210 K-5 (1948-1958) 1961 SRS Bush Negroes SRS
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/142 cont./
people who have lived there for a long time. They strike up relationships with the people of Assi, and that favors new unions. This explains the high proportion of unions between the women of this village and the Djuka (13 out of 78). On the contrary, almost no marriages to Djuka are observed in Papaïchton village, where no Djuka has settled permanently. /143/

SRS 213 [Koh]

The marriage proposal. The suitor is obliged to ask for the assent of his own mother and his uncles (at the very least the eldest of his classificatory uncles); in general he asks his father also.

[Koh] If two of his classificatory uncles are expressly opposed, the plan must be abandoned. But there is no possible sanction for disobedience.

The suitor does not make the proposal himself; after making sure of the agreement of the girl he sends two persons, one of his uncles or brothers and one of his sisters in the classificatory sense.

These envoys speak to the woman's mother and uncles assembled together. If they agree, they go to ask for the assent of the head of the lineage. The men and women of the woman's lineage drink together a liter of tafia brought by the envoys. Before drinking, the doyen of the lineage pours a little of it on the ground while invoking the ancestors, asking them to perpetuate the accord of the household and to grant them health and fecundity. This ceremony is made on the spot and they do not go to the fraga tiki, for they would be afraid to present themselves again at the fraga tiki in case of a break-up; prayer said anywhere in the village is not binding.

• [969]

The two envoys, man and woman, play a very precise role. The man represents the postulant (it is a sort of marriage by proxy).

/143 cont./

585 613 The head of the lineage calls a classificatory sister of the girl. He takes her by the hand and leads her to the suitor's envoy, saying: "I give thee this woman."

Then he calls a classificatory brother of the girl. He leads him to the suitor's envoy, saying: "I give thee this man."

This second part of the ceremony is purely symbolic; there is no question at all that this man and this woman are marrying. Its purpose seems to be to show the perfect equality of the man and the woman in the marriage.

[569] The words pronounced in the invocation to the ancestors are: "We give (this) woman to (this) man; may they live together, may they not be sick, may they have children, children who live."

[584] There is no need for the assent of the woman's father.

585 [583] If it is a question of the first marriage of a young girl, the fiancé comes, aided by his friends, to build her a house. He builds her a boat and buys for her what is necessary for

[429] domestic life. When the person who is bringing up the girl judges the time to be ripe, she gives her the pãnyi, garment of married women, authorizing thus the consummation of the marriage.

[613] [429] The husband who built the house asks the elders of his wife's lineage to come in front of the house to throw tafia, to ask the ancestors that the couple be fecund and live a long time in this house.

584 613 Here, for example, is how the marriage proposal to Chitalna (Aw.B.1, F43, Asisi village) by Déési (L1, F45, Loka village) proceeded in 1948.

To represent him Déési had sent his classificatory brother Tamu /144/ (L1, F32), older than he by about 15 years, and his classificatory aunt, Yaana (L1, E39). (See the genealogical table of the Lapé lineage.)

/144 cont./

584 613 The envoys, after making it known the evening before that they w[illegible]coming, presented themselves at 10 o'clock in the morning in Asiki-Awana Bakka village. Present were Irma, Chitalina's mother; Aséimin (Aw.B.1, E60), actual uncle; Antono (Aw.B.1, E67), one of the oldest of the classificatory uncles; Namu (Aw.B.1, E68), classificatory aunt; and the girl's brothers and sisters by the same mother.

Tamu took the floor, unfolding Dédsi's merits and stating that he had serious intentions. The eldest of the uncles declared

585 613 acceptance. Chitalina having fled according to custom, he took her young sister Boomi, who was only five years old, by the hand and led her to Tamu, saying, "I give thee this woman." Then he took Abéni, Chitalina's older brother, by the hand and led him to Yaana, saying, "I give thee this man."

• [X69] Next, tafia was poured on the ground while the ancestors were invoked in favor of the /new/ household.

The liter of tafia brought by Dédsi was shared symbolically in the evening among all the village inhabitants including the Afi lineage there.

585 431 For the installation of the household, since there was no more room near Irma's house to build another, the latter gave one of the two houses she possessed.

584 602 [595] Here is still another example concerning the two wives of Fintiman (Dju. F6, Boniville village).

For his first wife Mimi (K3, E156, Boniville) he sent his brother and sister by the same mother, Kiémeni and Fliana, who approached Mimi's mother and her classificatory uncle Lébiman.

Fintiman had previously made sure of the agreement of his own father Maiobi (Dip. I, E50), who had brought him up, of his mother Béniti, and of his uncle Diofé (Dju. E1), the eldest of the classificatory uncles.

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782
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Fig. 22. Offering of food to the ancestors.

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Fig. 23. Interrogation of the dead person.

/169 cont./

764 co-wife, on the contrary, are completely veiled and show by their state of prostration the keenest sorrow. Each of them is assisted by a female relative who supports them when they have to move somewhere else, for they are supposed to be too overcome to move alone.

764 The interrogation as to the causes of death has already
789 taken place the day before, but Tafanié proclaims, in front of
791 me, the result of it to the latest arrivals: the deceased was struck down by a yɔ̃ka which pursues the lineage with its kunu. She had already received several warnings in the form of illness: the yɔ̃ka had demanded a payment which she and her near relatives had neglected to furnish. Impossible to learn anything further before being able to interrogate this yɔ̃ka, whose habitual bearer has left for Saint-Laurent. It is necessary to wait for his return in order to mollify the yɔ̃ka's anger.

764 About ten o'clock the members of the ilɛnti kuutu go to-
769 ward the fraga tiki of the Awasa Bakka lo, in front of which they
778 all sit down on their stools. I notice that not a single man of
[613] the dead person's lineage appears in the front row. In it I recognize Popo (Lapé), Poopu (Dipélu II, Kormotibo), Tafanié (Papaïsson). The one who is speaking is a foreigner passing through, a very aged and respected Djuka.

[782] The elders invoke Masa Gadu and the ancestors in general, asking them to protect them from adversity in the future; then the offering of water and tafia takes place (no cane juice). I notice that a little is poured on each of the secondary fraga tiki erected for the sake of each one of the ancestors who pursue another lineage with their kunu. That lasts about a quarter of an hour.

764 Next someone goes to ask the deceased to whom she
789 bequeaths the Papa gadu god which manifested itself in her;
796 for the gods are bequeathed like the rest of the inheritance,
428 even if those concerned are divinities which exercise the kunu
424

/171 cont./

764 Work is then resumed. Those present who are not ɔ̀kɔ̀mɛ̂, including me, are invited to throw several shovels of earth. On top of the mound are placed the ɔ̀kɔ̀y and the objects used in the mourning, topped by the dead woman's bench. Then those present go away without haste and wash at the wharf. Several shots are again fired while the canoes go away.

The graves are spaced about 10 meters apart. The dead are not grouped by lineages; the cemetery is extended as needed, and the dead person is put in the first available spot. Thus Koufida (Awara Bakka) is placed beside Asfida (Lapé), a hundred-year-old woman dead a few months before.

They show me the graves of village heads I have known. Dadé († in 1951), Atikan († in 1953). The mounds are already half settled down, the brush on them is as much as a meter high.

[169] One of my boatmen posts a little tafia on his mother's grave which is at the edge /172/ of the path. None of those present leaves the group to go to the grave of his relatives.

Thanking Ceremonies. On the twenty-third at eight [692] o'clock, the ɛ̀ɛ̀ni kuutu is convened and sits at the edge of the mortuary shed.

[169] The ɔ̀kɔ̀mɛ̂ and in a general way those who have worked on behalf of the dead person (only about ten remain, the others have left to work) are seated opposite the men of the dead woman's lineage.

It is always Tafamé who speaks. Béna (Djo), seated before the ɔ̀kɔ̀mɛ̂, turned toward the speaker, plays the role of respondant. Tafamé thanks all those who have worked on behalf of the dead person, detailing at length the various jobs, then citing their various lineages; he repeats the same thing in [693] several ways and his speech is interminable. Sometimes he [415] interrupts himself to put in a good joke or drink a bumper of tafia. A 15-liter demijohn is seen circulating inside the shed.

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Beti

/173 cont./

764 broko de. The eighth day after death, a ceremony called broko dé takes place, not to be confused with the lifting of mourning. This ceremony marks the end of the burial rites proper; when it is ended, the dead person can no longer be questioned directly; the period of mourning begins.

[613] It is a very simple ceremony which attracts few people and happens almost entirely within the lineage.

[538] At nightfall they begin to relate Ananzi tales, those traditional tales which make the audience vibrate together and

[535] create a special atmosphere. Then come the zhuè, nsas, and awam dances which last all night.

764 769 The next day each one busies himself at small jobs in the village while the women prepare the meal. This is the ceremony called towé nyé, which takes place at the edge of the mortuary shed about four o'clock in the afternoon. Each woman of the lineage brings a large bowl of rice and a small bowl containing either a piece of meat cooked in sauce or some fish. The oldest man of the lineage has large banana leaves spread out on the ground at the edge of the shed; he takes a little of each dish and puts it down on the leaves, while at the same time addressing the ancestors in ordinary language in the tone of an intimate conversation: "Dead of the family, come, come to eat today."

That lasts perhaps a quarter of an hour, while those present are seated, immobile and meditative. The ancestors are supposed to eat the spiritual part of the food -- kaaka fu nyé.

Then the elders line up at the edge of the shed five or six small children of about ten years, each one of whom holds a basin upside down. A man keeps them in line /174/ with the aid of a long stick. Then, at a signal, he lifts the stick and the children dash headlong with laughs and shouts toward the ancestors' portion, each one carrying away all he could cover

[613] with his basin. The ceremony terminates with a joyful meal eaten together by the whole lineage, symbol of the communion between the dead and the living.

764 /176 cont./

Cemeteries. There are two cemeteries in Boni country: one on the lands of the Dikan lineage for the people living on the French bank, the other downstream from Kotika for the inhabitants of that village. They are ordinary places which nothing indicates from the bank, for they are covered like the rest of the country by secondary forest. The dead are buried there in graves aligned parallel to the river, about seven meters apart. The dead are placed with heads turned toward the river. No separation by lineage exists within the cemetery.

The graves are not marked by any decoration, and at the end of about ten years, the mound having settled down, no trace of the burial remains.

[767] The graves are never cleaned. Only the ?dandi heads, who have received special instruction, know the graves of the principal chiefs and the boundaries of the cemetery.

769 [784] [785] The Boni never go to the cemetery alone and do not make offerings on the graves of their near relatives. Someone who would frequent the cemetery alone would be suspected of being a wisindi seeking to capture the yaka of a dead person.

764 489 Even if they are right near the villages, cemeteries are never connected directly to them by paths, and the dead are transported by boat. By proceeding thus they hope to isolate the villages from evil influences.

966 If someone dies by drowning, he is buried away from the cemetery. According to Mr. W. F. van Lier, among the Djuka [761] [784] all drowned persons are supposed to have been victims of a kumu; the Boni do not have this conception and declare that they [184] have lost the meaning of this custom; one notices, however, that they observe mourning for the drowned according to the usual rites.

/175 cont./

965 995 For the duration of the mourning, any indiscretion of the surviving spouse will draw upon him the public vengeance of the yoka; it is important for him to make himself forgiven, to have a modest and decent demeanor. The dead person might be vexed with him for having kept his health and good looks. So they try to give the surviving spouse the aspect of a miserable and unfortunate being. The dead person's relatives are particularly interested in having this discipline observed, for in the opposite case the dead person's yoka would turn back its vengeance against his own lineage. During all the mourning the whole lineage considers itself in danger. So custom requires that during all this period the widower (or widow) be placed under the authority of the dead person's lineage.

965 In the case of concubinage, mourning is taken on by the spouse even if the relations have not been made official. People cite the example of Way (Boniville) who assumed mourning for a Djuka with whom she had begun to live before he could propose to her officially.

965 State of persons in mourning. A widower's state is exactly like [179] that of a widow, which tends to show that in the eyes of the refugee Blacks the dead, men and women, have the same level of being and the same power over the living.

965 995 613 The surviving spouse is placed under the protection of the ancestors of the dead spouse's lineage. Without this protection insured by the prayers of the members of this lineage, he would find himself defenseless. The proof of it is that the principal sanction against him is to lift the mourning prematurely by going to the fraga tiki to tell the ancestors that one is no longer interested in him. That amounts indirectly to cursing him (see below the example of Gamba).

/175 cont./

765 613 The spouse in mourning is taken temporarily out of his lineage and placed under the /176/ /Fig. 24 appears here/ /177/ protection of the lineage of the dead spouse, in a situation corresponding to that of the client in ancient /Roman/ society.

[769] He can no longer pray to his own ancestors. If he is sick he asks the elders of the dead spouse's lineage to pray for him to their own ancestors.

765 A man in mourning is freed from certain obligations and responsibilities:

--He cannot take part in a council of his lineage;

--If there is a squabble between his lineage and another, he cannot be taken to task;

--Part of his catch may not be appropriated in case of great nivrée;

--He is freed from his funerary obligations as an ɔkɔmã or kisimã.

765 602 613 A man in mourning is placed under the collective authority of his wife's lineage, but actually under the authority of her near relatives: mother, grandmother, real uncles and aunts. It is real kinship which is involved in matters of mourning; classificatory kinship enters into it only if all the near relatives are dead.

In general it is old women of these near relatives who are charged with watching over the behavior of the widower and on the other hand with seeing that he does not lack anything he needs.

For example Alémin (Aw.B.1) was married to Yundu (L2, G60) of the Lapé 2 fraction, living in Loka village. When she died in May, 1957, he was put under the authority of Asakundu (L2, E55), his wife's grandmother, and of Asakundu's sister [768] Térésa, living in Boniville. Since he had not yet built a hut for his wife, he was enjoined to come specially to build himself a little hut in Loka village in order to reside near Asakundu.

[Text Continues on p. 269]

/178 cont./

765 He cannot go anywhere without the authorization of his watchers, and only for a specific purpose. For example, when Alémin found work with a European in October, 1957, the two old women who were charged with looking after him came to deliver him to his employer like a prisoner, making it clear in particular that they were forbidding him to disembark in such-and-such villages where he had nothing to do.

Alémin was authorized to be present at the mourning for his mother, but he did not take part in any of the ceremonies at all. He was not present at the interrogation of the dead woman carried in her coffin, and was not informed about the arrangements made for dividing up the inheritance.

765 768 A man in mourning does not necessarily live in the hut he has had built for his wife, but in a hut designated for him. He may (this is Alémin's case) be invited to build a small hut which, at the end of the mourning, will become the property of his mother-in-law.

When the house has been bequeathed, the heir may take possession of it only if the spouse has not received orders to reside in it. Only at the end of mourning does he enter fully into possession of his rights.

765 [769] A man in mourning may not go out of his house after nightfall, particularly on nights when people dance after having called all the ancestors. He would have everything to fear from the yɔ́ka.

He may circulate in the village and speak to anyone he wishes, but must not joke or be present at any festivities whatever, not even to hear tales. Not only may he not pay court to a woman, but it is still forbidden for him to make discreet overtures, even through an intermediary, with an eye to remarriage.

/179 cont./

765 After three months, an offering is made at the fraga tiki
[769] of the dead person's lineage, setting forth how much her spouse
[778] has respected her memory and asking permission to lighten the
[613] manifestations of his sorrow. The mourning is then lightened, but the man in mourning continues to wear a bandeau around his head or at the very least an old beret.

765 During the first months the man in mourning has no other
461 responsibility than to hunt and fish at the order of the dead
[613] woman's lineage. He does his own cooking with the food given to him; he cuts a clearing for his mother-in-law or another woman of the deceased's relatives, who will farm it with him.
[431] Next, he receives the order to go and earn the money necessary for the sizable contribution he must bring to the festival of the lifting of mourning. During the entire duration of the mourning he must report on his work and moves.

765 When the end of mourning approaches, he must do a job
[606] for the benefit of his mother-in-law, generally redoing the roof of her house or building a boat for her.

These arrangements do not involve any material sanction
[626] whatever. Like the rest of the social life of the Refugee Blacks, they rest entirely upon fear of a suprahuman sanction.
[589] After the lifting of mourning, the person in mourning may remarry without further delay.

765 State of widows and co-wives of a widower. The state of a
768 woman in mourning is practically identical to that of a widower.
[562] She lives for the duration of mourning in her deceased husband's house under the surveillance of his near relatives on the maternal
[613] side. The dead man's lineage lends her all the objects she
[439] needs and furnishes the imported commodities (salt, kerosene, soap) that she uses. On the other hand, she may freely use the produce of the clearing that her husband had cut for her, since it is taken for granted that these products are the exclusive property of the wife.

/180 cont./

765 613 689 An incident. In 1957, the Saramaka Gamba (75 years old), Way's widower (Dip. I), caused a serious incident by refusing several times the obedience he owed to the latter's lineage, on the pretext that he was old and knew how to behave.

His son Maliki (born of a Saramaka woman), whom he was raising, married to Way's daughter, had gone fishing above the Litani. Upon his return, Kwau (80 years old), Way's elder brother, reproached him for having left without authorization, pointing out that his father, Gamba, being placed under his authority by mourning, he was too, because of this fact. [578] Gamba did not accept this reasoning and the two old men fought. This was a fine scandal. [769] [798] [784] Kwau and the elders of Way's lineage came before the fraga tiki of L'Enfant Perdu village to lift his mourning forthwith (which, let us recall, is the equivalent of cursing him by delivering him over to the vengeance of the dead woman's yɔrka).

Members of Way's family went to break up the shacks of Gamba and his son, who lived hidden in the bush for some time. [627] [769] [798] Then Gamba had the village heads intercede and obtained his pardon. The elders of Way's lineage went to the fraga tiki to utter the words putting things back in order.

765 Lifting of mourning. The festival of the lifting of mourning - puu baaka - is celebrated 18 months to two years after the burial. The delay may be a little longer, for most often the village celebrates this festival for several of its dead at the same time. It is a heavy burden, for festivals for lifting mourning attract many people and everyone present must find as much as he wishes to eat and drink.

[621] This festival is celebrated in the framework of the village and not in that of the lineage. It will be celebrated in the same way for a Djuka who died in a Boni village, provided that he lived there a sufficiently long time. In such a case the expenses

/181 cont./

765 535 533 Next come the dances, always in the order sɔnge, susa, awasa, the rhythms given on the apinti drum. These are not possession dances and do not appear in themselves to have a religious meaning; all involve choruses in which the singers do not accompany themselves on any instrument at all; these songs have no other meaning than to exalt life; the Refugee Blacks find their best artistic expression in them. Many of them demonstrate dazzling imagination; the subjects are extremely varied, and every year new ones are created. But there is a certain number of "classics" which reappear in each festival. Let us mention: "The man who calls his dog lost in the woods"; "The song of the Balen River"; "The woman who watches over her daughter," etc. These songs are very beautiful, and in the great mourning festivals it is difficult to hear them without emotion. Songs and dances follow one another without interruption until the sun's return. This is what is called broko dɛ, "break a day." This ritual, which has a key value in the eyes of the Refugee Blacks, appears to be the affirmation by the group of the triumph of life over death.

765 [769] The fifth day, a kind of buffet is served to the guests under the mortuary shed. In the afternoon there is the offering of food to the ancestors, tɔwɛ nyɛ̃; this rite is a communion between the dead and the living.

[769] On the morning of the sixth day, the ceremony ends with the offering of water, celebrated not at the fraga tiki but at the edge of the shed, in honor of the ancestors. They invoke one [778] last time /182/ the yɔrka of the dead man (or the dead woman), while asking it to separate from his spouse for good and to leave her in peace! "U puu a umɛ̃ a baaka; yu ɛ̃ŋga umɛ̃ yu paati tidɛ, na: mu siki, na: wɛ̃ sani mu du ɛ̃ŋ, a mu dɛ bū. (We lift the mourning of (this) woman; thou and the woman, you separate from each other today; she must not be sick, nothing must happen to her, she must be well)."

/182 cont./

965 Then they address the dead person in the name of the people of his village: "We have done with thee, stay there where God has placed thee."

The spouse in mourning is again bathed in the river by old women who have themselves gone through mourning.

• [969] [975] Then they address the yɔrka of the ancestors and the entities of the Beyond who are imagined to have come in a crowd: "Ala sani di kɔm ya, yu mu luku ala ŋga bũ; u kaba ŋga yu; yu sa: waka ala peesi; (Each one of the beings who have come, be benevolent toward us all; we have finished with thee, thou canst go anywhere)."

On the seventh day most of those present begin to leave. An intimate ceremony brings the dead person's near relatives together in the very house where he died. They weep and lament one last time. Then a last offering of food is made in the same house, and they repeat the adjuration: "We have done with thee; stay where God has placed thee."

[968] [613] [431] The eighth day, the spouse whose mourning has just been lifted is conducted solemnly back to his village by the people of the dead person's lineage. He is congratulated, he offers food and drink to all those present. What he might have had left of savings disappears on this occasion.

He must sleep three nights in his village, still without being able to have relations with a woman. When this time limit has gone by, he comes to give back the red clothes which the dead person's lineage had lent to him. Only then is he free.

[114] Notes taken in Boniville in November, 1957 on the occasion of the lifting of mourning for Béniti. This festival is given for the lifting of mourning for ○ Béniti (Dju, E5, living in Boniville, † in 1955 at 75), of △ Tito (Kotika, Boniville, † in 1955 at 15), and of △ G..., boy of ten, son of a woman of the village of L'Enfant Perdu (Dip. I), dead in Boniville where he was reared by Térésa. The festival is given more than two years after death. Sometimes, when there is no spouse subjected to mourning

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765 [535] The buchiman execute the kwadyo dance, which seems to be an African war dance; they hold a stick in front of them and make the gesture of taking aim.

That lasts about half an hour.

The guests continue to arrive individually and settle themselves around the mortuary shed, seated on their little benches.

765 202 About three o'clock the drums begin to beat again. It is Bukuman, master of the art of speaking with the drum, who strikes the summons' formulas; the others give him the cue.

The drum speaks for a long time (1). An elder translates

> 1. It is more a question of conventional formulas than a language; two different sounds can be obtained from the drum by striking respectively with the fingers and with the palm.

for me approximately: "Other villages, be still, for there is a great festival in the grand man's village."

"We who are now living, we are going to do what our ancestors taught us long ago."

765 [551] Then the dead for whom mourning will be lifted are directly addressed, being called by name if they are men; for the women like Béniti, who cannot be called directly, for women do not have a drum-name, they call one of their deceased near relatives, here Diolé †, Béniti's brother: "Tell thy sister that we are going to part company with her, for we have been in mourning for her a long time and this is the custom, such as the ancestors did before us."

[769] "Ancestors, come, come near us, we are going to pour the tafia and cane juice for you."

[202] (Libations are made within the shed.) Then the drum addresses those present:

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The great gods Gwangwéla and Gédéosu of the Djuka are not known to the Boni.

Strictly speaking, no cult of Masa Gadu exists. No edifice is reserved for him, he has no priests, and no collective ceremonies are conducted on his behalf. He is nevertheless constantly present in the religious life of the Boni, associated with ancestor worship. Every ceremony of ancestor worship includes an invocation to Masa Gadu. From time to time, for specific motives such as the illness of a member of the lo, people go /195/ specially to the fraga tiki to invoke Masa Gadu. The oldest man of the lo officiates, while a younger one pours a little water and tafia at the foot of the fraga tiki; the elder addresses Masa Gadu in everyday language, in simple terms, in a familiar conversational tone, asking him for the cure of illnesses or the end of calamities. Those present, seated in a semicircle, punctuate the end of the speech with some rhythmical applause, uttering the ritual formula of thanks: "Gaã tãŋgi tãŋgi fi yu, Masa Gadu."

Outside of these ceremonies which hardly go beyond the framework of the lineage, everyone may address Masa Gadu directly by praying aloud, if, for example, he finds himself alone in the bush and prey to an illness. One never addresses Masa Gadu other than for a specific material purpose. Inner prayer for the purpose of spiritual perfection does not exist to our knowledge among the Refugee Blacks.

One applies directly to Masa Gadu when one believes oneself to be the victim of an iniquitous action (see curse). However, although the Refugee Blacks have a very lively sense of justice, they never call Masa Gadu to witness for the cruel and arbitrary vengeances (kunu) which the lower divinities are believed to exercise on them. It is taken for granted that all these divinities do conforms to the role which Masa Gadu has assigned to them and that the suffering they inflict on men is indispensable to the proper working of the universe.

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673 [754] [627] --Vengeance; if someone believes himself to be the victim of witchcraft, he must under no circumstances engage in counterwitchcraft or invoke his ancestors against his enemy. He may ask only for the protection of the ɔbia. It is Odun who [784] will avenge him by sooner or later killing the evil-doer.

[683] --Violence in any form whatever. It is regarded as a particularly serious offense against the laws of Odun to strike with an armed hand and to make human blood flow (1).

[684]

1. That explains the strictness with which the society of the Refugee Blacks limits the right of punishment granted to the wronged husband, who must strike only with bare fists in front of witnesses, never in the bush nor on the river. Fear of seeing [826] [952] human blood flow explains the reticence of the Boni toward minor surgical operations.

[641] [586] --Any attack on personal liberty by material or moral coercion; in particular, neither a man nor woman may be constrained to remain in a marriage which has ceased to please him; nobody may be forced to reside here or there.

[832] The forms of magic so popular among West Indians, aimed at capturing a person's love, are for this reason rejected by the Refugee Blacks and considered as a form of wisi.

[769] [754] --Any evocation of the spirits of the dead, even to ask them for protection, other than in the public ceremonies provided for by custom. Thus nobody must go to the cemetery to pray alone on his parents' grave. Whoever would do that would immediately be considered as wisima.

/218 cont./

794 995 The yɔrka. (The Boni say yɔɔka, the Djuka and the Creoles of Surinam yɔrka.) The expression yɔrka is used only to designate the spirits of the dead. But of course the elements of the yɔrka are present in the living man.

794 828 /219/ The yɔrka is the ordinary consciousness of the man, his memories, tastes, aversions, all that constitutes his personality. All that, for the Refugee Blacks, does not come from the divine plane but at least in part from former human existences, and after death will not reach the divine plane. The Refugee 995 Blacks seem to believe that after death, the yɔrka remains unchanged, will keep the same desires, the same aversions, the same thoughts; it is simply no longer in ordinary life, it has passed to another plane, intermediate between the divine and the human, from whence it continues to remain in a certain fashion in contact with men. The various informants we questioned on this subject declare that they have no idea of the fate of the yɔrka after death, of its place with respect to the divinities, of the rewards or punishments of which it may be the object according to the manner in which the man lived. These are questions they never ask themselves openly and which hardly interest them, all their interest being centered on earthly life. The idea of a paradise is absolutely foreign to them; [154] they acknowledge however in the case of the wisimã that they will be stripped of the force that every living being receives from the divine, and that thus destroyed as beings, they will no longer be more than empty shadows.

• 969 The gaã yɔrka, spirits of the ancestors, are believed to watch over their descendants and are subject to worship.

[997] Ancestor worship. Among the Refugee Blacks, ancestor worship is intimately bound up with all the acts of family and social life. They assume that the yɔrka of the ancestors are always present near their descendants and that they protect them. It is through them as intermediaries that the force emanated by the divine is received by the living.

/219 cont./

769 We have described the principal ceremonies of this worship in speaking of family life.

769 613 One addresses only his near ancestors in maternal line, and one addresses them all collectively. Just as the custom of the Refugee Blacks rejects all that might individualize one line within a lineage, it rejects every individual bond between a given dead person and a given living person. Just as "uncles" exercise guardianship collectively over "nephews," the dead collectively protect the living. It would be a grave offense against the customary law of the Refugee Blacks to go individually to the fraga tiki to invoke the yɔrka of one or another of his [784] relatives. We shall see further on that the only exception to this is for the ancestors who have made themselves conspicuous by exercising the kunu against another lineage.

Ancestor worship is organized within the lo, and its priest is the head of the lo, hedemɛ or captain. Individualized fractions (bee) which may exist within the lo, like Papaïston 2, have no separate ancestor worship.

769 778 The place of prayer is made up of a small square of ground about 1 meter x 1 meter, separated from village soil by pieces of boards; in the middle of this square is set a T-shaped post whose horizontal arm serves as support for a square of white cloth: this is the fraga tiki.

The cloth rots rapidly under the influence of bad weather, but it is not removed; a new one is attached over the old when it is too spoiled; likewise /220/ the post, which ends up by rotting, is not replaced as long as it does not fall to the ground. This behavior might be thought to be negligence, but it is nothing of the sort: for the Refugee Blacks, what has been offered to the ancestors is removed from the action of men; no one can touch it any more, even to repair it.

/220 cont./

769 778 Beside the principal fraga tiki one sometimes sees sticks bearing fragments of white cloth; they have been planted in honor of those ancestors who have demanded it.

769 778 782 The ceremonies at the fraga tiki have a very simple character; prayers are said in the ordinary language and often have the character of an intimate conversation. In the absence of the head of the lineage, an old man pronounces them; while he speaks, an assistant makes the offering of water and tafia. Pouring water on the ground is a rite having as its purpose entering into contact with the ancestors; it is seen performed in funeral ceremonies, before beginning the interrogation of the yɔ̃rka. The tafia is an offering in the literal sense of the term; at the time of the principal prayers being addressed to the ancestors, the offering of tafia is preceded by an offering of cane [272] juice, kyẽ̃ wata. Cane juice was the beverage on feast days in the times when the ancestors, at war with the Europeans, were bereft of tafia.

The prayer formulas most commonly used ask the ancestors to intercede with Masa gadu on behalf of their descendants: "Ancestors, watch over us, protect us, pray to Masa gadu for us so that...."

769 787 613 Possession by a yɔ̃rka. It is taken for granted that the yɔ̃rka of an ancestor can enter into a member of his matrilineage and reveal itself in the course of attacks of possession. This is a very rare phenomenon. In 1958, in all the Boni country, only about ten people were known who bore thus the yɔ̃rka of an ancestor. These attacks come on spontaneously, no cult having their provocation as its purpose. We were present in December, 1956 at one of these attacks in a young woman from Papaïston, Mili, about 20 years old. Since the day before, the yɔ̃rka of an ancestor of the lineage dead for two generations had manifested itself in her intermittently; these attacks lasted several minutes;

/220 cont./

769 778 782 her voice changed, imitating a man's; eyes staring, she appeared to have no longer any consciousness of what was around her. Then suddenly the attack would cease and she would busy herself with her household occupations in the most natural fashion. The yɔrka which was believed to become incarnate thus in Mili's body spoke of very commonplace things, repeating indefinitely sentences concerning minor happenings of the day, or asking for a small offering of tafia on its behalf at the fraga tiki. A psychiatrist would doubtless have thought of an attack of mental dissociation.

[784] These yɔrka are not feared by their involuntary bearer, since none can exercise a kunu against his own lineage; they manifest themselves only exceptionally, sometimes indicating remedies or warning of dangers. Thus it is that A... of the Dipɛ̃lu II lo, who has a Kumɛ̃nti besides, also has a yɔrka which revealed itself in him without ever having been called on. According to his comrades, this yɔrka sometimes steps in with a cavernous voice, notably in September, 1952, during a hunting expedition, where it shouted: "Let us not go that way, we shall meet a jaguar." A... lost consciousness for only a few seconds and had not been aware of anything. /Figs. 26 and 27 appear here./ /221/

795 828 The nɛ̃mseki (1). Each Refugee Black has a nɛ̃mseki, that is

1. This word seems to be a deformation of English "namesake" (homonym).

to say that certain elements of his personality are thought to originate from the reincarnation of a certain ancestor. This is a very obscure conception with the Boni, and without apparent correlation with their notion of the akka and the yɔrka; they never say: "I am the reincarnation of So-and-So," but simply:

/223 cont./

784 613 428 begin his instruction in order to become a suitable bearer. (If this procedure were not carried out, the god would not cease its kunu at all, and the possibility of entering into contact with it and appeasing it would be lost. Besides, sooner or later it would come back into a member of the lineage.)

784 613 [602] The kunu strikes without regard to kinship ties, even if kinship between the bearer of the god and the supposed victim is very distant. Ex.: The Papa gadu of Donasi (Papaïston lo) struck a young woman, Gou, with illness in January, 1957. Donasi and Gou are only relatives in the ninth degree. The [782] [361] members of the entire Papaïston lineage assembled to supplicate the god: even people of Wétiti village in the lower Maroni came.

775 784 613 The kunu exercised by the yɔrka of a dead person has a special importance in the eyes of the Refugee Blacks, for it has profound repercussions on the relations among the lineages.

[428] In principle, the yɔrka exercising a kunu has as bearer a living member of its own lineage, who will bequeath it at his death. But it is also possible that the yɔrka may take as bearer a member of the lineage upon which it exercises the kunu.

[782] In both cases, the rite to appease the yɔrka is the same; the yɔrka can be invoked effectively only by the members of its own lineage, since one can pray (at least in principle) only to one's own maternal ancestors.

When matrilineage A is struck by the kunu exercised by a yɔrka of matrilineage B, its members thereupon go to consult the elders of matrilineage A /sic/ and ask them to try to calm [769] the anger of their ancestor. The members of lineage A assemble [778] around the fraga tiki of lineage B, in back of the elders of this [787] lineage, in the presence of the bearer of the yɔrka, who calls on his gita, goes into trances and prophesying. The yɔrka [782] usually asks for an offering of cane juice and tafia, which is made at the foot of the /224/ fraga tiki by the elders of lineage B (for the rite to be efficacious, the offering must have been furnished by lineage A).

/224 cont./

775 784 769 769 778 613 A yɔrka exercising a kunu may also demand that another smaller fraga tiki be erected for it beside the principal fraga tiki of its lo. In the villages of the Refugee Blacks one often sees these little crosses provided with white veils like the main fraga tiki, planted beside it a little obliquely.

775 784 674 The notion of the kunu exercised by a yɔrka explains the rarity of murder among the Refugee Blacks. How would you dare to kill someone when, as soon as it is freed from his body, his yɔrka will have full latitude to make you sick, to make tree branches fall across your path, to cause to suffer and to kill all those dear to you? If someone is blinded by hate, it

775 784 762 is the idea of suicide which will dominate him. In October, 1952 we were able to observe this reaction in a man who had just been subject to a deep humiliation: "I am going to kill my body in order to go to kill that man and his whole family," he said to us, prey to a fit of rage; fortunately, when the fit had passed, he came back to a more sound outlook on things.

775 784 613 696 [171] It is to be noted that a yɔrka cannot exercise a kunu against its own lineage. This notion explains why, in the times when they exercised absolute authority, tribal chiefs had those condemned to death executed by men of the same lineage. Apparently similar practices were the rule in olden days in several African kingdoms, which allows one to think that notions analogous to those of the kunu may be rather widespread there.

784 613 Situation of the various lineages with respect to the kunu. There we touch on one of the most secret aspects of the social life of the Refugee Blacks. Years of living among them are necessary in order to obtain precise information on the nature and the mode of action of the kunu acting on the various lineages.

784 613 428 Nearly all the entities which now exercise their kunu on the Boni have been in their lineages since a very ancient period, to the point where the name of their first bearer is forgotten. They are transmitted inexorably from generation to generation. In the course of the ages, the kunu have accumulated, and now certain lineages are living with four, five, or even six kunu.

/226 cont./

628 614 784 787 152 769 778 The members of the Dipélu lineage did not believe a word of this affair, convinced that Kiboya, a proud and scheming woman, had pretended the gita to make herself interesting. Nevertheless, to bring back peace, they decided to go to Asisi and to ask pardon in front of the fraga tiki, pouring tafia, asking the ancestors not to take vengeance, the living being reconciled.

784 614 795 /227/ (Note that in this affair, the yɔrka manifests itself in a member of the lineage on which it exercises the kunu.)

784 614 613 Kunu of the Awara Bakka lineage. The Awara Bakka lineage does not form a unit with respect to the kunu, and the situation of its fractions is particularly interesting. This lineage includes:

--A principal fraction (Aw.B.1);

--A fraction whose kinship ties with the first are forgotten (Aw.B.2), whose position with respect to the kunu we have not been able to define.

--Finally, a group descended from Anèta, Djuka woman, wife of Pééyon † (Aw.B.1) settled in Asisi with her descendants in uterine line. We have called this group Aw.B.3. It has a separate kunu originating in the Djuka village of Tabiki where Anèta came from.

784 787 796 613 428 The Awara Bakka I. all living in Asisi village, had to our knowledge three kunu in 1957:

--One exercised by a Papa gadu god, borne up to 1957 by O Kuluba (Aw.B.1.-D1). At her death in April, 1957, she bequeathed it, contrary to custom, to a person of another fraction, Summa (Aw.B.3). But the god did not ratify this legacy and, in January, 1958, it manifested itself in OLéna (Aw.B.1, F52), thus remaining in the same lineage;

/228 cont./

784 A kunu is exercised by a Dipélu yaka, borne in 1958 by
795 a Loka woman. It is invoked before the fraga tiki of l'Enfant
778 Perdu village (Dipélu I). Sometimes a broko dé is celebrated
769 for it in the same forms as the ceremony of the eighth day
613 after death.

784 We have likewise not been able to collect complete
613 information on the kunu of the Kotika lineage. This lineage,
114 divided into three fractions, forms a unit with respect to the kunu.

784 A kunu is exercised by the yaka of a Surinam Creole
613 assassinated in former times by a member of the lineage. Its
795 bearer in 1958 was Todo (K1, E68), a man of the Kotika lo
769 living in Boniville. In 1958 a young woman of the lineage,
761 Awini (K1, E37), died suddenly; the yaka revealed that it
684 had struck Awini because she had a liaison with Sintamann (K3, E145), thus committing pikadu. The idea of the collective responsibility of the lineage is so deeply accepted by the Boni that the near relatives of the dead woman did not reproach Sintamann at all.

784 /229/ A yaka of the Kotika lineage may exercise a kunu on
613 the Djuka. This is the case of an affair going back to 1950;
795 a young woman died some time after having a serious discussion
761 with a Djuka woman who had hit her. Deaths among the Djuka
619 these last years had been attributed to its vengeance.

784 It seems that there is no other kunu exercised by a Djuka
619 upon a Boni lineage and vice versa. This is surprising, con-
613 sidering the fights which in former times set the two nations against each other.

621 The Djuka and Saramaka living isolated in the midst
784 of the Boni know their kunu, which were revealed to them in
655 childhood. In case of sickness, they employ divinatory pro-
613 cedures in order to know what kunu is concerned, then they make offerings. But in case of serious illness, they are forced to go back to the village of origin of their lineage.

/232 cont./

75 784 796 It is important not to confuse the kunu with the sufferings which other divinities can arbitrarily make men undergo. The kunu has a systematic character. But a divinity theoretically beneficent, and which has come into a man after being called on, may also from time to time bring misfortunes if such is its whim of the moment.

752 796 784 [787] [428] In 1949, G... (Dju) was busy cooking a crab in the house of his mother D... A machete which was fastened to the wall suddenly detached itself and wounded him in the right hand. Now his mother had an Ampuku which had imposed the crab on her as kina. This Ampuku, immediately called on, revealed that it really was it which had struck G..., for it did not like to see D...'s son eat crab (note that G... was not at all held to the observance of this kina, for no kina is transmitted from mother to son).

784 775 613 969 Neither must the kunu exercised by a yaka be confused with the vengeance that a dead person can exercise against the members of his own lineage in order to punish them for having neglected their duties.

Punishment inflicted by an ancestor of the lineage seems for the Boni to be a notion distinct from that of the kunu. Vengeance exercised by a yaka upon its own lineage is regarded as exceptional and devoid of the inexorable and definitive character of the kunu, but they assume it to be possible. They cited to us the case of Yali (Loka), who [962] committed suicide when accused of sorcery by the people [753] of his lineage. Since then, his yaka has caused sicknesses [761] and deaths in his own village.

796 784 613 [761] Conversely, a god which exercises the kunu upon a lineage may in certain cases intervene in favor of this lineage if such is its whim of the moment. Thus the death of Diamanti (Aw.B.2. Asisi village, † in 1955) is attributed to the god which exercises the kunu on the village of L'Enfant Perdu and whose bearer was Pééchina. Diamanti had wronged someone of this village and the god had intervened against her.

/232 cont./

In a general way, they consider that the bearer of a god exercising the kunu has nothing to fear from it personally if he rigorously observes the kina which have been imposed upon him. On the other hand, this god will punish any injury to its bearer. Thus these bearers (almost always old women) live surrounded by respect and fear.

/233/ Observations in January, 1958 (misfortunes attributed to vengeance of ancestors on their own lineage).

Do (Lapé) is taken ill on January 7, 1958 with a violent attack of dysentery. The same day his five-year-old son is grievously hurt at the wharf by falling on a broken bottle. Alarmed by this coincidence, the members of the Lapé lo assemble and proceed to question a possessed person. The latter reveals that it is the doing of an old woman of the lineage, Atala, dead for two years. Several lineage members have already been sick from this; the dead woman wanted to sanction offenses committed by the people of the lineage.

The same day in Boniville, Klémenti (Dɔu), to whom I am recounting this affair, tells me that before the lifting of mourning for his mother Béniti, he and his sister were sick. Divination showed that it was the doing of Béniti, who wished to hasten the celebration of the ceremony.

The kunu and social peace among the Boni. Role of the grand man. The kunu exercized by a yɔrka creates very strange relations among the Boni lineages. As blind and arbitrary as the vengeance attributed to the yɔrka may be, the Boni have the sense of the legal unity of the lineage too much for any resentment to exist: "They are killing our family..."; and yet the two lineages find themselves henceforth irreparably bound together. The victims of the kunu can no longer get along without people of the lineage of the yɔrka which pursues them with its vengeance, since they alone, by their prayers, can appease temporarily the anger of their ancestor. One conceives of the

754 /246 cont./
755 The maître asked 2,000 francs from him as the price of
648 his consultation.

789 Curse. Someone who judges himself victim of evil-doing has at his disposal a supreme resource: /247/ cursing his adversary, that is, appealing directly to the supreme God, Masa Gadu, to ask him to punish his adversary. This is called seni gadu -- sending God -- against someone. To do that, while asking God to kill him or make him sick, one kneels and strikes the ground with both hands in the presence of the adversary or in front of his house. This act is regarded as totally different from wisi, for one is relying on the justice of God, who judges with equity and punishes only the guilty.

However that may be, cursing is for the Refugee Blacks a very serious act. It may happen that, feeling guilty, the source of the injustice asks pardon and promises to make amends for his misdeeds. The one who uttered the curse again implores Masa Gadu in order to take back the words he spoke: "He has given me satisfaction, do nothing against him." But oftener still it happens that a complicated affair is involved, that both parties concerned are persuaded of their legitimate
[692] ground and curse each other. The case must then be carried before the grand man and straightened out at once or misfortunes
[695] may pounce upon both lineages. The grand man judges without appeal and inflicts a punishment on the one who was wrong
[778] on the main issue of the debate. Then he obliges the ad-
[702] versaries to be reconciled before the fraga tiki, where the offering of tafia and water is made.

[828] The effect of these conceptions is to render nearly im-
[754] possible hidden hatreds and rancors, which the Refugee Blacks fear very much, for they are the source of wisi.

688 In general, the act of getting angry in public and serious-
689 ly insulting somebody is considered as an offense against moral and religious law, capable of attracting misfortunes; it is an

/264 cont./

796
769 tiki. They pour water first, then tafia, while uttering the
539 prayer whose whole text follows, taken from a tape recording:
[126]

Fintiman (pouring the water):

"Ancestors, hail! We have come to you; it is for the new year that we have come to you! as you yourselves used to do when you were (alive). May God protect us until the new year comes back again; thus it is that you yourselves used to pour the water on behalf of the ancestors. We have come to our place of prayer to speak with you, to ask you to carry our words to God."

(The same formulas are repeated several times.)

Lébiman:

"This is the New Year's Day water. It is God's day. He has arrived. Grand man Awensay (1), (because) I have

1. Predecessor of Grand Man Difu, who died in 1936. In each village the last dead head is invoked by name in order to ask him to call the more ancient dead.

not known the more distant ancestors, it is you alone that I call; call all the others."

"It has arrived, God's day. As for the grand man himself, a slight hindrance has come to him, he could not come, but it is not that he is no longer interested in the village."

"Watch over all the people who are there... we have come to pour water on your behalf, so that you will watch over the chickens and dogs of the village (and up to the living men) (2). Protect the grand man; if misfortune was about to

2. Usual prayer formula.

/264 cont./

796 769 539 happen to him, may it pass to one side. Thus we have come to pour (the water) to beg you to protect the village. The year has changed today, it is a new year. May we have money and food, we beg of you, ancestors; watch over our plantings, may they prosper, may the young women who fish at the wharf catch fish."

"All the captains pour (the water), the fiskal, the majors pour (3) for all the lineages; protect the villages."

[184] [622]

3. Honorific titles imitated from the Djuka but which, among the Boni, do not really mean anything; the head of Kormotibo village bears the title fiskal and the one of Kotika village the title major.

Fintiman:

"The people who have pure hearts, protect them, big and small. But the people whose hearts are not good, who do evil spells to kill others and decrease the village, we do not pray for them; turn them out."

"Watch over the grand man; if something happens to him, it must not be said that we, the people who are seated there, have not prayed well. Great ancestors, we supplicate you, if we were on the point of meeting misfortune, that we may find the good."

(They begin to pour the tafia.)

/265/ "Grand Man Awensay ...." (Thanks follow for a trip which was carried out without hindrance.)

Lébiman:

"May the grand man live long with us, may misfortune not happen to him."

/265 cont./

796 769 539

"Great ancestors who are in God's country, it is you who have the strength of the village."

(The tafia gushes forth.)

"Drink, drink, but do not get drunk to the point of being deluded, look with favor upon the righteous, scatter the wicked."

796 782

Next, Fintiman goes off to make an offering of tafia accompanied by a few words at the chapel of Odun. Then he goes to the edge of the mortuary shed to pour water, tafia, and coffee on behalf of Samalobi, the grand man's brother, for whom mourning has not been lifted.

He goes next to the house of the deceased grand man Awensay to make an offering of coffee (Awensay, like the other grand men, used to drink coffee).

796 782 829

The prayer of the preceding year (January 1, 1957), presided over by grandfather Samalobi, had had a higher inspiration. After praying in about the same terms as above for the Boni, they prayed for the Djuka, explaining that in days gone by Boni and Djuka had fought, but that all that was forgotten. They prayed next for the Saramaka, then for the Indians, finally for the Europeans. I asked why; they answered: "It is because the Europeans were the ones who brought us to this country which has become ours." /p. 266 is blank/

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CHAPTER VIII

538 765

TALES -- PROVERBS

Tales (Anɛ̃si tɔli) and Proverbs (ɔdo) retain an important social function among the Refugee Blacks. It is always by tales that the great customary ceremonies of the lifting of mourning begin. Their function is to concentrate the attention of the